Islam and the Mechanisms of the Free and Dignified Life

By

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Abstract

frequently examining the methods of free, dignified life as decreed by Islam through intellectual conferences that are specialized in reminding of the distinction between theory and practice. legislating educational means that comprise all stages of man's life to nourish him intellectually with Islam's distinguished rules of a free and dignified life, and all that is required for such life like independence, authority and progress for man as a citizen and considering homeland as sacred. Adopting methods and means to combat the menace of ignorance, slavery, tyranny and lack of respect for human beings. establishing the principle of Shura (Counselling) as an indispensable asset in all forms of life in general, and in the leadership and power positions in particular.

Keywords: Islam, Free and Dignified Life

Introduction

The accumulation of visions, principles, educational and experimental implementations in the attempt to pursue the most straight path has "cognitively" reduced the shape of man's life. Being a random accumulation, it has generated a random knowledge, that at times gets closer to life while in other times it is far away from it. This randomly accumulated knowledge influenced man's life and history to the point that it was the only thing responsible for the way his history, approaches, knowledges, happiness and misery are all shaped. The pillars of the positive prosperity that man's knowledge has produced are not far away from the ideals, virtues and human values in the religious system, however; the difference that took place between the virtues and their implementations made the gap between them more prominent. This explains the deviation for some and for others it allows the justification for wrong beliefs, which causes a confusion in realizing the principles and their implementation. In fact, the religious system revolves lofty values that are free of defects, contradictions and conflicts. This research tackles the features of a free, dignified, and harmonious life that is a result of the world of virtues that is Islam, it shuns every other aspect that deviates from such life and leads to death, slavery and disgrace. The research falls into two sections, section one discusses, in three sub-sections, the features of life in the Quran and the Sunnah; the features of freedom in the Quran and the Sunnah; and the features of dignity in them as well.

Section two investigates the problems of understanding religious texts in two subsections, the first deals with the problem of understanding the texts. The second includes, under the title of methods of implementation, three notions; with the Prophet, in the Quran and Sunnah, and finally with those who did not follow The Prophet and his family's method. The latter is discussed in the light of two notions, the religious scholars and the likes in the Quran and the Sunnah, and some of the non-religious.

1.1.1   Some of the features mentioned in the Islamic legal texts
1.1.2   Features of life in The Quran and the Sunnah
1.1.3   In the Quran
  1.1.1.1 God Almighty say in the Quran: {O believers! Respond to Allah and His

Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a person and their heart, and that to Him you will all be gathered}. [Al-Anfal: 24]

According to Al-Tabataba'i (43-44): In this verse {and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are ˈtrueˈ believers.} [Al-Anfal: 1] After He calls them to follow the true call and not to turn away from it after hearing it, God anew confirms that they should respond to Him and to the Prophet, {Have you seen ˈO Prophetˈ those who have taken their own desires as their god? ˈAnd soˈ Allah left them to stray knowingly, sealed their hearing and hearts, and placed a cover on their sight. Who then can guide them after Allah? Will you ˈallˈ not then be mindful?} [Al-Jathiya: 23]. The right to know and to work are the necessary requirement for a happy human life that the human instinct calls for. This is what the aforementioned verse refers to, and it is a common reference, what the Prophet calls for is the true religion, that is Islam, which the Quran interpret as following the instinct in what it dictates as good knowledge and work. (Al-Tabataba'I:47)

1.1.1.2.   God Almighty says: { But whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life, then We will raise them up blind on the Day of Judgment} [Taha:124]. Al-Ayyashi indicates that, "God does not do them harm unless they do themselves harm by committing sins and following what He forbids." (p.207).

Antarah ibn Shadad says,
If death to be represented, it takes my shape
When the enemies encounter me in battlefield (Diwan Antarah)

1.1.1.3 God Almighty says, {We said, "Descend all of you! Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows it, there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve} [Al-Baqarah:38]. Al-Tusi states that following in the footsteps, taking the example are analogous. In hadith: leaders and followers, the leaders are the masters. The followers are the people who follow them. Fear and impatience in the face of pain are analogous, sadness and distress are also analogous. (1:175)

These three verses indicate that through ages Islam has been the guidance, even in the ages that preceded the advent of Prophet Mohammed. They emphasize that Islam is the guidance, the way, the righteous path, the legal law, and the religion which guarantees man's and society's well-being this world and the afterlife. God says, {let them worship the Lord of this ˈSacredˈ House, Who has fed them against hunger and made them secure against fear} [Quraysh:3,4].

Al-Tusi states that, "with the money He gave them and by facilitating their trade through summer and winter, and by securing them from fear attack in the Sacred House which all the Arabs' hearts unanimously glorify" (p.414). So the first verse which includes life, the second verse which states that there is no wretchedness in the following, and the third verse in its statement of happiness that removes away fear and sadness, all establish, with the emphasis of chapter Quraysh the characteristics of the natural life that Islam calls for and fight for.

1.1.2: In the Sunnah

The Prophet Mohammed said, "Do you know why the believers are called so? This is because people can entrust them with their souls and fortunes. May I tell you about the true Muslims? The true Muslims are those from whose hands –i.e. acts- and tongues –i.e. words- people are saved. May I tell you about the true Muhajirs? They are those who deserted the sins as well as everything that Allah has forbidden." (Sadooq, 2016:31). Imam Ali said, "People are

of two kinds: either your brethren in religion or your likes in creation" (Majlesi,1403:600)

In Sahih Bukhari and Muslim, "he said, "Tell me, Messenger of God, supposing I meet an infidel and we fight together and he strikes one of my hands with his sword and cuts it off, then flies for refuge from me to a tree and says he has submitted himself to God (or, in another version, says when I intend to kill him that there is no god but God), shall I kill him after he has said it?" He replied, "Do not kill him." He protested, "But, Messenger of God, he cut off one of my hands." God's Messenger then replied, "Do not kill him, for if you do so, he will be in the position in which you were before you killed him, and you will be in the position in which he was before he made his testimony."[1]

And he said: O people, extend greetings (saying Salam to each other), keep relations with your kin, provide food (to people) and pray at night when people are asleep and you will enter Paradise in peace. (Dumiyati, 2011:87)[2]

In this sense these hadiths indicate the way of peaceful living and securing one's own homeland, the first hadith generalizes the state of peace on all people, and in the latter the hadith does not specify for spreading peace is for all people and creatures. Imam Ali's hadith indicates general brotherhood that has two forms, one in religion and the other in creation, it is a call for co-existence. The hadith indicates the acceptance of the testimony from the non-Muslim, even the one who is attacking and repents at once since it is well-known that whoever withholds from doing harm is secured, God says, {Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are fair} [Al-Mumtahanah:8], this is also the opinion of Sadiq Al-Shirazi (alshirazi.net).

1.2. Some of the Legal Texts on Freedom
1.2.1. Freedom in the Quran and the Sunnah
1.2.1.1. In the Quran

Islam calls for life after it is created and founded by Allah, the God of Islam, and Islam also calls for sacred freedom, God syas, {Allah sets forth a parable: a slave who lacks all means, compared to a ˹free˺ man to whom We granted a good provision, of which he donates ˹freely,˺ openly and secretly. Are they equal? Praise be to Allah. In fact, most of them do not know} [An-Nahl:75].

And He says: {It is not appropriate for someone who Allah has blessed with the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood to say to people, "Worship me instead of Allah." Rather, he would say, "Be devoted to the worship of your Lord ˹alone˺"—in accordance with what these prophets read in the Scripture and what they taught.} [Al-Imran:79]

Ayyashi states that this means the worshipper has nothing in his hands. Al-Tusi states that the worshipper not being to do anything is not an indication of their inability, since they are able to act. What is meant is the worshipper does not have authority over the money and this is a general state in all that he possesses or act upon (408-409). Tabatabai' mentions in details the state of subjugation to other than Allah, he said "there are members of people who are called slaves, they are called in this manner because they are owned by other than Allah, a

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[1] Narrated by Bukhari in (3449) the opening of the book of retaliation. In Kitab Al-Maghazi, it is mentioned in the book of the Angels' witness of the Battle of Badr. In Sahih Muslim it is mentioned in (95) the chapter of Faith, the book of prohibiting the killing of the infidel after saying there is no god but Allah. And the author, Muhammad Habib bin Abdullah, argued in his book (Zad Al-Muslim), vol. 4, p. 396, he (the infidel) must have uttered the rest of the testimony "I testify that Mohammed is the messenger of God," and he cited others who would argue that (the infidel)'s saying: I submitted to God means his embrace to Islam is approved and they never added anything after that, the hadith was narrated by Abu Dawoud also in his book in the chapter of Al-Jihad, while Al-Nasai narrated it in his book in the chapter of Al-Siyer.

[2] It is similar to the hadith in At-Tarmidhi, vol.4, p.65, hadith no. 260, and al-Darimi vol.2, p.275.

slave is ultimately deprived of having independent will" (339).

1.2.1.2. In the Sunnah

Imam Ali said, "Don't be someone else's slave while God created you free" (Abdo: 51) whereas Omar ibn Al-Khattab said, "Since when you enslaved people and their mothers had born them free." There is a huge difference between Imam Ali's notion and Al-Khattab's notion in the following:

First, Imam Ali prohibited slavery in a direct statement, while Omar's prohibition is embedded in a rhetorical question. Direct statement is preferred over embedding.

Second, Imam Ali prohibited slavery in all its forms even with the consent of the person whether he is bought or not by other people, while Omar's saying addresses the owners and by extension it includes prohibition of forcing people to blindly obey.

Third, Imam Ali addresses the whole mankind, whereas Omar's saying addresses the masters.

Fourth, Imam Ali's speech (Sadooq, 1379 AH) (Majlesi, 1403: 129) is equal to the Prophet's speech, so it abounds with all aspects of eloquence, figurative language and rhetoric.

Fifth, when Khosrow's daughters were brought hostages, Imam Ali did exactly what preached for when he said, "I emancipate my lot," Omar said, "You've ruined my opinion"[3] because emancipating slaves or some of them means legally all of them can be emancipated, while Omar's opinion was to evaluate them then sell them, Imam Ali said, "daughters of Kings shall not be sold as slaves" (Az-Zamakhshari,1412:350). There is a big difference in theory and practice here.

Imam Sadiq said about the freedom of non-Muslims, "All people are free except for the adults who admit themselves as owned by others or those whom there is evidence for their slavery" (An-Nori,1998: 372)

1.3. Some Legal Texts on Dignity
1.3.1. Dignity in the Quran and the Sunnah
1.3.1.1 In the Quran

There are verses that clearly state the importance of man's recognition of his dignity that is granted to him by Allah, {Indeed, We have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures} [Al-Isra: 70]

1.3.1.2. In the Sunnah

The Prophet said, "Ask for your needs with honor, for it is in God's hands to attain them for you" (Al-Amily, 1412: 71)

Imam Ali said, "Dignify yourself by avoiding low things even when your desires call you to them, for what you lose of yourself cannot be compensated" (Ar-Reshehri, 1349: 460).

Scholars state that if the believer wants to do ablution for prayer but obtaining water is related to some humiliating condition, God prohibits accepting the condition under humiliation, moreover, He abates the ablution. The believer should do ablution with dust because man's

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[3] Lectures of The late Sayed Mohammed Ash-Shirazi, I attended in Qum, Iran

dignity is more precious for God than praying with humiliation, and the prayer in this case is not problematic.

Understanding the Legal Texts and Methods of Implementation

2.1.   Understanding the Legal Texts

Many scholars and investigators set out to research this issue, including Professor Abdul Amir Zahid who dedicated a book to explain this issue and its problems, entitled The Problem of Understanding Texts. The cause of this problem is not the text itself, nor the multiplicity of texts, nor is the absence of some texts. However, most of disagreement is generated from the scholar who attempts to investigate a text with the influence of his own judgment, the environment he lives in, the ruler and the political authority.

Here appears a need with a rationalistic nature that is unanimous, as follows:

1-   The text should be general heeding the rights of all human beings as much as that is possible.
2-   It preserves nature and all its element, animals, plants and things.
3-   It gives heed to what is coming in future, the people in future, and the nature of this future.
4-   Being easy and not tiresome.
5-   Being within man's potentials and abilities, that is not impossible to achieve.
6-   Being compatible with the principles of compassion, forgiveness, benevolence and peace.
7-   Being compatible with man's dignity and protection.

The Imamate scholars said that for these qualities as in some material in Fiqh precedence over any other matters, while the thing they deal with has only three dimensions.

The first dimension is related to worshipping, such as pilgrimage, fasting and prayer rules.

The second dimension is related to "treatment" which mostly deals with personal matters like selling, marriage, loan and the likes.

The third dimension is a general one that is related to all human beings in addition to Muslims and Imamates, in matters like army, industry, agriculture and education.

The jurist, in his treatment of the text, has the right to observe whatever apparent matters is revealed to him, but he does not have the right to issue fatwas that contradicts the intentions of God Almighty, which are taken for granted in all the heavenly books and among all sane people, the error that a scholar falls into has a great impact.[4] In the third dimension there should be a compatibility between the intentions of the sacred law and the his opinion and fatwa, once he could not attain that he should not go further beyond the agreement of the jurists to make sure that the intentions of the sacred law are well-preserved in theory and practice.

Therefore, the difference in opinion among the jurists should preserve religion, homeland, unity, and the future of man while the contrary to that is not accepted. Zahid states that, "the triple division of this world means there three abodes; the abode of Islam, the abode of war, and the abode of the Covenant, although apparently there are more than three abodes. Based

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[4] In the hadith, "Beware of a scholar's error", hadith no. 22 in "Al-Maqasid Al-Hasana," p 19. and in Al-Hakim's Mustadrak, vol.4, p.460. Also in Al-Alwani's Al-Amthal, p.258.

on that the central motive is not religion and faith, it is rather war and convenance. Fairozabadi states, "The abode of war is the non-Muslim country that there is no reconciliation between us and them" (p.63). There are two different opinions in regard to the abode of Covenent:

First: Some considered that it is a particular part that is adjacent to the abode of Islam or the abode of war, it has its own rules and traces. Al-Shafai and the Hanbali scholars upheld this opinion.

Second: as long as there is a peace agreement with the Muslims, the abode of reconciliation comes within the abode of Islam since it is a duty to protect this country from Muslims, this is an opinion that a lot of jurists uphold in the light of a dual division. Al-Zahili suggests that the first opinion and he believes that is the basis for the current international relations, and the way for trade exchange and economic interests. He also believes that the notion of the abode of Covenent generated from the development of the of relation of the Islamic country with other nations. In that time, warfare was the dominant condition and the dual division was more probable. Therefore, the triple division is a result of the mutual attacks between Muslims and the Persian and the Romans which extended to the age of juristic discretion and what comes after it, this led to the juristic collection of laws that state this triple division as a central motive for establishing relations. So the terms the abode of Islam or the abode of war are not legal Quranic terms or Sunnah terms, in fact they were coined by jurists as a result of the status quo in order to organize some rules, so it is a division that is compiled to its time and should be cancelled after the cause for its coinage has receded. Although the Imamate sanction is not following the same methods and approaches of the four Sunni sanctions, Al-Tusi adopted the dual division while Al-Hilly adopted the triple division, the reason for this difference is possibly that Al-Tusi lived in an age that was closer to the age of Islamic expansions and religious wars while Al- Hilly witnessed the state of peace-making and treaties that were signed between the warring states. All the jurists agreed that the abode of Islam means the country where Islam's rituals, once it is occupied by infidels it remains an abode of Islam as long as Islam's rituals and worshipping are active in it. Th jurists believe that there two things to be considered, first, the number of Muslims in the country, second the freedom they have in performing them (Zahid, 2016: 51). It seems that the problem emerged with the emergence of the text.

Regarding the division, it seems to be exceeding the triple one as long as it is related to the development of relations between Muslims and others in addition to the change in the way the term abode of Islam is defined. And all of them must be preserved and defended, including in the country in which there is cognitively one of these concepts, even if it is a single person:

1-   Where Muslims absolutely constitute the majority, whether the ruler is Muslim or an infidel.
2-   Where the Muslims have absolute control, whether Muslims are minority or majority.
3-   Where a place was previously ruled absolutely by Muslims or ruling without authority, and the Muslims in the present are minority or majority even if it is just one Muslim.
4-   When a country's people accept to reconcile with Muslims and giving them authority.
5-   The country where the people and the ruler make a covenant of not declaring war whatsoever, they are peaceful with or without a condition.
6-   Whoever accepts living with or next to Muslims with various conditions and terms.

In terms of commitment, the religious motive is the strongest, this could be found explicitly expressed in the Quran where the shura (counselling) is the method, {who respond to their Lord, establish prayer, conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, and donate from

what We have provided for them} [Ash-Shuraa: 38].

2.2. Methods of Implementation
2.2.1. With Prophet Mohammed.

The Prophet emphasized the concept of citizenship of man regardless of his religion and sanction, he made a contract of mutual defense with the tribe of Khuzaa against any outside attack. When Quraysh attacked Khuzaa before Quraysh embrace Islam (Ashour, 2019), The Prophet rushed to defend them and it was in this situation that eh said his famous speech, "May victory not be mine, if I do not help Bani Ka'ab" (Abi- Alhadid, 262) by which he means the tribe of Khuzaa. In Al-Seera Al-Halabiya, the statement comes with an addition " help them with what I would help my people with." He also said in similar situations, "I've witnessed in Abdulla bin Jedan's home an alliance I would not trade for even the most precious camels, had it been in Islam I would have loved to be called with it. They allied to mainatain virtues and to prevent injustice" Here the Prophet is talking about the alliance of the Virtuous which was initiated to help the oppressed against injustice.

In regard to the law the Prophet enacted in Medina he took into account human rights before considering Muslims' rights, and the act which states that whoever drops the weapon is safe was implemented by the Prophet wherever he goes.

The reports about the Infallible Imams shows that they kept the peaceful living principle whether they are rulers or opponents. When Imam Ali was under the ruling of Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman, he never showed any kind of war or intention to overthrow the system although he detected several problems in it. It is known that when he showed up in Al-Jamal conflict in Basra he forgave the people of Basra who were involved in the fight (Abi-Al-Hadid, 415)

2.2.2. Prophet Mohammed's family and their followers

It is worth mentioning that there were figures who followed the righteous law either in ruling or otherwise, but they were known to take human rights into consideration. Such was Al-Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubayd al-Thaqafi, when became a ruler over Iraq he did not violate laws and committed to the sacred law. He did not break his covenant even with those who killed Imam Hussien until they themselves broke it like Omar bin Saad. He did not attack women nor children nor stole money. He released his followers when he gave them the choice to leave him[5]. Al-Hakim mentioned in his Al-Mustadrak this incident: "5974 - Hujr ibn 'Adi known as Abu Abdulrahman, came as a deputy to the Prophet, he witness Qadisiya battle, Al-Jamal conflict and Siffin battle with Imam Ali. He was killed by Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan in Marj Adra, he left two sons: Abdullah and Abdulrahman, who were tortured to death by Musaab bin Az-Zubayer. Hujr was killed in the year 53 AH. Al-Thahabi did not express a view in his Al-Talkhees and he did not comment on that" (Al-Hakim, 531). In a text that describes Al-Hajaj: (in Sahih Bukhari: "Abdullah bin Omar was praying behind Al-Hajaj, as well as Anas bin Malik, while Al-Hajaj was defiantly disobedient and unjust." Another example: Al-Hajaj is notorious for his boldness and his daring acts of killing Muslims, even the best of them. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates in his Musannaf from Omayer bin Hani': I witnessed ibn Omar when Al-Hajaj was besieging ibn Az-Zubayer, Ibn Omar's house was in between them, he would probably attend the prayer with this party or the other party. This is authentic source) (Al-Maqdam) they did not maintain the boundaries of the sacred law. They pretended to be religious as Saladin did to the Fatimides in Egypt. Al-Salabi (2008) mentioned in his book, "Saladin was influenced by Sultan Nur al-Din

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[5] The Rise of Al-Mokhtar, A documentary aired on tv channels, in Persian and Arabic dubbing.

Mahmoud and learned from him how to confront the Shiite wave, and the Crusader invasion," and in another occasion in the book he mentioned, "Elimination of Fatimide, some of the methods were so severe, violent and immediate, others would use tricks and gradually set them up. In other occasions the military force was used whereas others would employ education, persuasion and attempt to induce them by religious and social charities and endowments. Al-Qadi al-Fadil has a significant role in this strategy of severing the Fatimide movement, burning the Ismaili Shiite's books. He cancelled all the religious festivals related to them, and eliminated their coins, keeping the members of the Fatimides house [sic], and the continuous chasing of any remnants of Shiite in Syria and Yemen. The Crusades were held under the religious cloak. This reversed understanding of religion resulted from the mistaken reading and the deficient interpretation like the Khawarij when they interpreted the verse, {Noah had prayed, "My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth. For if You spare ´any of˺ them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to ˹wicked˺ sinners, staunch disbelievers.} [Noah: 26- 27], they legislated the killing of women and children even those in the wombs of their mothers, based on their interpretations. This problem of misinterpreting religion is still present today. ISIS is an example of what the hadith of Imam Ali mentioned of people wearing Islam like a reversed coat. This situation will continue as long as the elderly are not over, as God says in the aforementioned verse, and they will continue to give birth to younger sinners. (Tabatabai', 20)

2.2.3. *Those who did not follow the Prophet and his family*
2.2.3.1. *Some religious scholars and the likes.*

Religious scholar here are not those who sought corruption in the world under the guise of religion, but rather those who made corruption and sabotage as a religion, while God does not command immorality and evil, instead He says "Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as courtesy to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful." [An-Nahl:90].

It is important to contemplate here the way corruption is legislated. Firstly, we start with the Prophet's hadith, "Do not revert to disbelief after me by striking (cutting) the necks of one another."(Ibn Hajr, 2013: 552). Most of Muslims reverted to disbelief and they killed each other based on some wrong knowledge accumulation, this is similar to the events in Ridda (apostacy) wars as well as the Janissary in the Ottoman era who were an aid to the state until they changed and became tyrannical to the point that Sultan Mahmoud II put an end to them after he eliminated the majority of them in 16th of June 1826 AD (10th of Dhul Qi'dah 1301 AH) because of their resistance, mutiny and transgression over rights (AL-Muhami, 1981: 123,124).

All these incidents were given a religious justification although they have no relation to what Islam calls for. It is noted that in these incidents the order is commanded by the highest legislative position in the Muslim country that is the Caliph, for they were known as caliphs of Omayyad, Abbasids, and Ottomans. One of the disgraces of the Abbasids is the incident they call the sack of Amorium which was razed completely because of a woman's cry of help for the Caliph Mutaism (ibid, 46). There are several examples in this book about the Ottoman empire's deeds that were legislated unjustly by the jurists. In Osmanli website, the researcher ascribes the moral disintegration to the fatwas of Shaykh al-Islām (2019).

In conclusion, Islam is exempt of this policy where freedom and dignity are confiscated, the way of life that Islam calls for and seeks to establish is distinguished among all religions.

2.2.3.1. *Some of the non-religious and the likes*

Figures in the past like, Yazid, and in modern times like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin,

Saddam, Napoleon and other rulers considered themselves as the ultimate source of all the legislative, judicial, executive and journalistic authorities. They filled the world with wars and destruction, and confiscated life, freedom and dignity from those who came under their rule. Such wars as WWI, WWII, the War of Roses, the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan, and other acts of arson and killing which still go on till nowadays. God says, {She reasoned, "Indeed, when kings invade a land, they ruin it and debase its nobles. They really do so!} [An-Naml:34].

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